ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

[www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk)

**CLERK TO THE COUNCIL**  33 Swaines Way

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**Minutes of a meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC)**

**held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on Monday 22nd May 2023 following the AGM**

**Present:**

Cllr D Monteath-Wilson [Chair] Cllr S Daw

Cllr J Watkins [Vice Chair] Cllr S Rabagliati

Cllr F Baker Cllr A Harris

Cllr J Spring

**In attendance:**

Mrs Victoria Rutt - Parish Clerk

Approximately 48 members of the public

**15.** **Chairman’s Welcome**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson explained that everyone had been welcomed at the AGM.

**16. Public Questions**

1. Mr Nick Guyatt welcomed the new Councillors and looks forward to working with the invigorated Council. He explained that he has recently seen horses and motorbikes on the Recreation Ground and explained that there is no notice referring to the byelaws on the Tye or the Recreation Ground. The Clerk explains there is a sign on the Tye but does believe it is weathered. There has never been one on the Recreation Ground but this will be rectified. **Action 1.** Mr Nick Beechey reported that the sign on the Tye is still in place, but it has perished.

**17. Apologies for absence**

No apologies.

**18. Report from Maria Caulfield MP**

Maria Caulfield MP was unable to attend the meeting, but she submitted a report which can be found in **Appendix B**.

**19. Report from Cllr Stephen Shing [ESCC]**

No attendance or report.

**20. Report from Cllr David Greaves [WDC]**

Cllr David Greaves was recently elected but did contact the Clerk to explain that he would have to send his apologies to the May and June meeting. He did, however, submit a report which can be found in **Appendix C**.

**21. Declaration of interests**

Cllr Daw declared an interest as she is a Churchwarden. Cllr Watkins is a member of AEG.

**22. Minutes**

Cllr. Watkins proposed and Cllr. Daw seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the APC meeting held on 20th March 2023 were a true and accurate record. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cllr. Monteath-Wilson duly signed the minutes.

**23. Finance**

23.1 To approve the Statement of Finances: EOY 2023 and May 2023

Cllr. Daw proposed and Cllr. Watkins seconded a motion to approve the Statement of Finances for EOY 2023 and May 2023. [**Appendix A**]. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Cllr. Daw signed the Invoices for Payment.

23.2 To approve and adopt Finance Regulations and Standing Orders 2023

Cllr. Daw proposed and Cllr. Harris seconded that all Councillors have had sight of the documents and they approved the Finance Regulations and Standing Orders 2023. **MOTION CARRIED.**

23.3 To approve and adopt Risk Register and Asset Register 2023

Cllr. Daw proposed and Cllr. Watkins seconded that all Councillors have had sight of the Risk Register and Asset Register 2023 and approved. **MOTION CARRIED.**

23.4 To review and adopt all of APC’s policies [*found on APC website*]

Cllr. Rabagliati proposed and Cllr. Watkins seconded that all Councillors have had sight of the policies and that they have reviewed and approved all of APC’s policies. **MOTION CARRIED.**

23.5 To approve insurance renewal with BHIB Insurance Brokers for 2022/23

Clerk reported that the insurance renewal has come through. The Clerk confirmed it is an £21 increase which is in line with current inflation. Cllr Harris proposed that the insurance is renewed and a payment of £1,117.98 is made. Cllr Baker seconded this decision. **MOTION CARRIED.**

23.6 To approve section 1 of the annual return for 2022/23

Cllr. Daw proposed and Cllr. Baker seconded that all Councillors have had sight of section 1 of the annual return for 2022/23 and approved. **MOTION CARRIED.**

23.7 To approve section 2 of the annual return for 2022/23

Cllr. Baker proposed and Cllr. Daw seconded that all Councillors have had sight of section 2 of the annual return for 2022/23 and approved. **MOTION CARRIED.**

23.8 To confirm sight and approval of internal audit report 2023

Cllr. Rabaglaiti proposed and Cllr. Daw seconded that all Councillors have had sight of the Internal Audit report 2023 and approved. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**24. To consider and agree whether to cease action regarding TVG37 known as Dukes Green**

Cllr Monteath-Wilson explained that the issue raised of gates being erected at Dukes Green and potentially enclosing a Village Green has been looked into for many months. The Rights of Way team at East Sussex County Council, NALC and SDNPA have been liaised with and no concerns have been raised. Cllr Daw proposed that this matter is now closed, this was seconded by Cllr Spring. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**25. To discuss and agree whether there is a need for ‘gym equipment’ on the Recreation Ground**

Cllr Daw proposed at the last meeting that residents have spoken about having gym equipment placed on the grassed area between the playground and Pavilion. As Cllr Daw is the new portfolio holder she would like to look into this further. She explained that she has liaised with Mr John Harmer and the proposed site has been questioned due to cricket balls going in that direction when games are held. All Councillors agreed that Cllr Daw will look into this idea further and report back to the full Council when she has further information.

**26. Report on Highways and Twittens – Cllr Rabagliati**

Cllr Rabagliati reported that following the recent public consultation, ESCC have shared the final report which shows there was a positive response from residents. Clerk is going to find out if this can now be published. **Action 2.** This report will now go to the Lead Member Meeting for approval which is being held in August 2023.

The Clerk reported that she is aware that there are many areas around the village that have either been recently repaired with very poor works or not repaired at all. ESH have recently had a change of contractor which is some of the reasons for this but the Clerk is constantly chasing this and a group of Wealden Clerks are meeting with ESH in early July to raise complaints after 6 months of very poor service delivery.

**27. Report on Allotments – Cllr Baker**

Clerk updated that following a change in grass cutting schedule, the allotment paths were removed to find someone local in the village who could strim the allotment paths on an adhoc basis. The Clerk has got a few people interested and the Council agreed that the Clerk could move this forward as the paths need cutting urgently. The Clerk confirmed that no tender process is required due to the amount of money being under the limit amount and she confirmed there is money in the grass cutting budget to cover these costs.

**28. Report on Public Transport – Cllr Harris**

The Clerk confirmed there is no update.

**29. Report on Rights of Way and Countryside – Cllr Harris**

Clerk will share the Rights of Way map with Cllr Harris to aid future reporting. There are a number of outstanding reports which the Clerk will chase with the ROW team at ESCC.

**Action 3.**

29.1 To discuss and agree whether to support land at Pleasant Rise to be submitted to SNDPA call for Local Green Spaces

The Clerk explained that this was placed on the agenda following a request from Cllr Spring as he was made aware that a resident submitted the land at Pleasant Rise Farm as a ‘Local Green Space’ at the same time that APC submitted 4 sites in Alfriston at the end of 2022: the allotments, Recreation Ground, land behind The Broadway and land behind North Road. The Clerk has spoken with the officer leading this at SDNPA and he confirmed that whilst APC can email in stating support or objection, regardless of their comments the submission has been accepted and is currently going through the stages. The first one being whether it meets the criteria. Cllr Spring confirmed that it is the land going up the valley containing the livery yard and it is around 75 acres. It would be nice to give it that extra layer of protection. Cllr Spring proposed that APC support this submission, this was seconded by Cllr Baker. The Clerk will email SDNPA. **Action 4.**

**30. Report on Strategic Planning – Cllr Spring**

The Clerk confirmed there is no update.

**31. Report on Tye and Recreation Ground – Cllr Daw**

The Clerk reported that the first cuts have been undertaken by the new grass contractor but sadly there have been a few teething issues such as the grass being mown around the benches which them not being moved and strimming not going up to the edges. The Clerk has requested a site meeting with the contractor to discuss these issues.

Cllr Watkins reported that the drain cover near the Pavilion has been lifted up and sticks have been thrown down the drain. It was agreed that there needs to be a way to secure the cover. Cllr Spring volunteered to look at this, this was agreed, and he will report back in due course. **Action 5.**

**32. Report from Planning Committee – Cllr Watkins**

32.1 Applications to be considered by the APC Planning Committee

**SDNP/23/00730/HOUS** 1A Rose Cottage, High Street, Alfriston, BN26 5SZ

The APC Planning committee stated that whilst this is a retrospective application, they feel that in its current format and colour, it is out of place in the setting it is in. The structure is also very close to the kitchen window, with a consequent detrimental effect on light and view, therefore the committee objects to this application.

Cllr Spring stated that it would be useful to see the terms of references from SDNPA in relation to planning framework so he knows what he can and can’t comment on.

Clerk will find this and circulate it to Planning Committee. **Action 6.**

32.2 Applications considered by APC Planning Committee since last meeting.

**SDNP/23/00870/FUL** The Star Inn, High Street, BN26 5TA APC supported, SDNPA granted.

**SDNP/23/01040/HOUS** 23 Deans Road, Alfriston, BN26 5XJ APC objected, ongoing.

**SDNP/23/01305/FUL** Saddlers House, High Street, Alfriston, BN26 5SZ APC objected, ongoing.

32.3 Applications notified or awaiting decision from SDNPA.

**SDNP/23/00607/HOUS** 7 Deans Road, Alfriston, East Sussex, BN26 5XR Granted.

**SDNP/23/00701/HOUS** Bramble Cottage, Weavers Lane, Alfriston, BN26 5TH Granted.

**SDNP/23/00670/HOUS** Riverbank, River Lane, Alfriston, East Sussex, BN26 5SX Withdrawn.

**SDNP/23/00684/TPO** Trees West of Smugglers Close, Alfriston, East Sussex Ongoing.

32.4 Enforcement updates

The Clerk reported that the enforcement issue regarding signage on the shop front at Swallow’s Wing, Market Square has now been made smaller and the case has been closed.

**33. Reports from Outside Bodies**

*33.1 Heartstart*: Mr Watkins reported that there are no responders in the village, and he is very keen to get one or two people trained. This would be done by the South Coast Ambulance Service and Heartstart have money available to fund the uniform. Once trained they would receive a device to alert them to any serious incident in the village in order to attend and assist. If anyone is interested, please let Mr Watkins know. Mr Watkins confirmed that there is a defibrillator going into the school and one will be going onto the Pavilion in due course once the paperwork has been finalised.

*33.2 Alfriston Emergency Group*: no report.

*33.3 Flood Forum* – Mr John Hurwood reported that a meeting was held on the 17th April 2023 and Alfriston points below were made:

* Wealden District Council report that the gullies at the Willows car park are to be checked and cleared but not sure when.
* The river mouth at Exceat has remained open with good water flow through the winter, although it was felt that the beach area should be excavated to a greater depth.
* An EA pump has been in operation at the Willows since the 7th of November and has helped to reduce flooding on the West side of the river. The Eastern banks are being eroded by the frequent floods, which means that the flooding on that side of the valley is worse.
* The Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board have suffered further delays to their proposed local dredging and bank work in Alfriston, due to not getting permissions and also delicate environmental issues. It has been agreed that APC will be included in the information emails in future.

*33.3 Neighbourhood Watch* – no report.

*33.5 Twinning Committee* – Mr Michael Anderson sent in the following report. ‘*We have finalised a schedule of events over summer, culminating in our visit to Veules during the second weekend in September. Budding oenophiles should start practicing for the blind-tasting of sparkling wines event planned for July 14th!’*

*33.6 St Andrew’s Church* – Cllr Daw reported that the event on the Tye for the Kings Coronation was wonderful, St Andrews did free tea and coffee, with both the Singing Kettle and Badgers donating cakes. There is a music festival coming up with the leaflets being published soon. With the animal blessing service, any money raised is going to go towards the fundraising to install railings at the rear of the church yard to make it safer. The quote for the works is £3k. Please remember that the Cuckmere News deadline the 10th June. In the Church are the ‘Save the Children’ envelopes if anyone would like one. Finally, Cllr Daw thanked the members who did the flowers for the Coronation as they were amazing.

*33.7 Clergy House –* Ms Holly Jones sent in the following report*.* ‘*It’s been a busy few months getting the house and garden ready to reopen for the season and then welcoming nearly 1,000 visitors in April. Many of our visitors had been staying in or around Alfriston and we received some wonderful feedback about the Clergy House and the village. We have a new Visitor Experience Officer called Alex who is settling into her role alongside the gardener Sara who started last September.  The garden team have worked so hard over the last few months, facing all the problems that the wet weather and flooding brings but at last the gardens are finally bouncing into life and are really starting to look and smell beautiful.*

*Our Conservation Assistant Tracey and her volunteers managed a fair amount of in-depth conservation work over the closed season and when you walk round the house its clear to see how much it has benefited from that work. We are open every Friday and Saturday 10.30 am to 4.30pm (last admission 4pm). Dogs are welcome on leads in the garden.’*

*33.8 Cuckmere Buses* – no report.

*33.9 AWMH* – Mr Adrian Butcher reported that the Alfriston Hub is up and running with 70 email addresses and greater communication is happening. If anyone has any social ideas, send them to the Hub and it can be circulated. AWMH is now a licensed wedding venue.

*33.10 Speedwatch* – Clerk asked that if anyone can spare 2 hours a month to volunteer, please contact her to become a member. We always need new members.

**34. Correspondence to the Clerk**

1. The Clerk received reports of cars parked in the turning circle on Tye Road, all afternoon and evening of Saturday 20th May causing issues with cars turning around. The cars were linked to a wedding at the OCC. Clerk will contact the OCC about future events. **Action 7.**

2. Cllr Daw asked for permission to use the Tye on the bank holiday weekend in August for an event known as Tye Fest. It will be an event with music, food and drink. More details to be given in due course. All Councillors granted permission.

3. The Clerk updated that the Post Office contacted the village store to gain access to the rear of the post box so they could investigate, but access was refused. The Post Office have now agreed to proceed with repairing the box from the front in the hope there is not too much damage inside and to the rear. In order to do this, they need to have licences in place and special contractors due to asbestos. They were hoping to start on the 23rd May, however the permits were not received on time. The Post Office have assured the Clerk that they are intending to repair and reinstate the post box as it is a historic value for the village, but Health and Safety must be adhered to for obvious reasons. Cllr Harris commented that he can understand the reluctance of the Village Store to allow access as if asbestos got into the shop they would have to close. The Clerk will update further when she hears more.

4. Mr Richard Price wrote to explain that the first meeting of Climate Change Conversations was held on the 13th May which went well. They are a small but growing and committed group to promote climate change in Alfriston.

5. In April 2023, the previous Council were asked for permission by a couple holding their wedding in the AWMH in August for a firework display. Permission was not granted.

6. A small company who arrange running events and who have been to Alfriston several times requested the use of the Tye for their finish line on a Saturday in July. It will be low key and quiet, between 14:00 – 21:00 with 150 runners. The Clerk confirmed there have never been any issues and they always keep the place tidy. Permission was granted.

7. Mrs Katie Salmon wrote in about the White Bridge requiring some TLC. The Clerk has written to the Rights of Way team at ESCC who are responsible for the bridge to request it to be looked into.

**35. Public Questions**

1. Mrs Katie Salmon said that a picture of the Alfriston winning dog in the Kings Coronation was on Canadian TV.

2. Mrs Nicky Vassell asked whether the contractor has been paid who has done all the recent poor repairs around the village. The Clerk explained that the contractor works for District Council level not Parish Council, so this information is not known.

3. Ms Diana Kelly stated that the earlier planning application for 1a Rose Cottage is next to her property, and it is being promoted as bike storage and blocks her kitchen window. Clerk confirmed this will be included in the SDNPA comments.

4. Mrs Lucie Harmer said the gym equipment on the Rec is a great idea, but the proposed location would not be a great idea due to cricket balls, but maybe further up the hill near the Broadway would be a better spot.

5. Mr Nick Guyatt reported that kerb stones are being moved along The Broadway and placed on the goal net to hold it down. He also stated that people are parking on the Recreation Ground along North Road. Mr Guyatt will take pictures if this happens again. There is no evidence that these incidents are anything to do with the school but the Clerk will liaise with Mrs Hudson to ask for a friendly reminder to go out to parents about considerate parking in the areas surrounding the school. **Action 8**.

6. Ms Caroline Adcock stated that she is pleased to hear that APC support the land submission for Pleasant Rise Farm as a Local Green Space.

7. Mrs Lucie Harmer explained that she does not think it is parents from school parking poorly around the Recreation Ground, it can also be walkers parking to go on walks on the South Downs Way.

8. Mr Nick Beechey asked whether the Parish Council were proposing to draw up a detailed plan prior to the ESCC Lead Member Meeting. It was agreed that this was a great idea and Mr Beechey was asked if he would be willing to be a member of the APC Traffic sub-committee due to his immense input so far and his knowledge on the issue. Mr Beechey agreed if the Council were happy to have him.

**36. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next APC meeting is Monday 19th June 2023 in the Alfriston War

Memorial Hall at 19:15.

Signed: A black signature on a white background

Description automatically generated with low confidenceMrs Victoria Rutt [Clerk and RFO]

**APPENDIX A**

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**APPENDIX B**

**Report from Maria Caulfield MP**

**Pothole Contractor**

The Government has recently awarded East Sussex £2,360,000 extra to help fill our many potholes. We have a new contractor for East Sussex County Council now in place and hopefully we will see better quality road repairs. The new contractor is Balfour Beatty and potholes and other repairs can be reported here <https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/>

**Rural England Prosperity Fund**

Wealden will benefit from £838,120 in funding from the Conservative Government to support rural businesses and create jobs to grow the rural economy.

**Meeting with the Housing Minister**

Last week I met with the Housing Minister, Rachel Mclean, to discuss the Governments plans to end national housing targets, so local areas can decide their own and to end the practice of Planning Inspectors overturning local planning decisions which has in the past impacted residents across the constituency. It is important to protect our green spaces and I will keep the parish informed on any developments in regard to this.

**Extra School Funding**

The Government is investing an extra £2 billion into schools this year and next, with every state school in England benefiting and schools in Lewes constituency receiving £1,931,188 in extra funding. The extra funding will deliver the highest real terms spending per pupil in history by 2024–25. A typical primary school will receive approximately an extra £35,000 and a typical secondary school will receive an extra £200,000.

This is delivering on the Government’s commitment to provide a world class education and deliver opportunity for all – wherever they come from and whatever their background – particularly those who face challenges or who need extra support

**New Sewage Update**

Not only has the Government produced the £56 billion Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan, but last week we voted on several new measures to make sure water companies are taking immediate action. Firstly, we are lifting the cap on civil penalties for water and sewerage companies, raising them up to unlimited penalties so that polluters pay for their impact on the environment, with funds now being reinvested into further improving rivers and water bodies. Secondly, the Government has now put targets in the Storm Overflows Reduction Plan on a statutory footing, making them legally binding so water companies have to comply.

The Government are working hard to not just transform our sewage system but ensuring our water companies are held to account for their performance.

# **Extended Cost of Living Payments**

I know many families are struggling to make ends meet in the face of rising prices. That is why I am delighted that the Government has allocated a further £7,793,568 to East Sussex County Council through the Household Support Fund, doubling down on the commitment to help the most vulnerable families with rising costs. This fund is a lifeline for local residents, and this extension will ensure this vital support is available for families who are struggling for another year.

**APPENDIX C**

**Report from Cllr David Greaves, Wealden District Councillor**

This is my first report as the newly elected District Councillor for South Downs ward. This involvement is completely new for me and I shall do my best to pull together salient points that are of significance to the Parish Council. My role is to represent the residents of the ward. I will do my best to ensure residents and the Parish Council’s views are represented. I look forward to working with the Parish Council and voluntary groups within the village and Parish. The results for the District Council elections are outlined in the below table.

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It is interesting that the Conservatives gained 35% of the WDC overall vote yet achieved control of just 20% of the wards. Analysis suggests that an agreement was made by the Green Party and the Liberal Democrats to stand down candidates in numerous seats (not in South Downs ward) in order to concentrate an anti-Conservative vote – however this is denied by those Parties.

The Conservatives ran candidates in 44 out of 45 seats.

It is interesting that out of 41 wards, the number of candidates from the Green and Liberal Democrat Parties who stood against each other was just 3 seats. The number where all parties were represented was zero. This ensured tactical voting which clearly on this occasion to has worked. No doubt some will be pleased to bring down the former administration but the implications for the new Council are very much unknown at this stage and indeed should be concerning for council tax payers and local businesses.

The Full Council of Wealden District Council is set for the 24th May where we will have greater clarity on who will be Leader of Wealden District Council. We shall find out who is to represent various portfolios and the allocations to various committees. Other civic duties for which the new administration will have responsibility should also be announced. At the time of writing this there is no clarity on any of these matters.

At this point of transition to a new administration I would like to acknowledge the position of Wealden District Council under the previous Conservative administration.

1. The recycling rate of Wealden District Council was 49.5% under a Conservative run Council and the highest recycling in Sussex. The rest of the waste gets taken to the Newhaven incinerator which generates local power for the area. Only 1% of waste is sent to landfill which is regarded as unable to be recycled or incinerated.
2. The charge of brown bins for garden green waste is currently set at £55 per annum per household.
3. The Wealden District Council proportion of Council rose by 2.99% and the Council was in a good financial position.
4. The Council had maintained Free Car Parking in Wealden Car Parks to support the local economy. We were also opposed to on street car park charging (Parking Meters).
5. We had created a new modern Crematorium which is serving the local community and generating an income for the Council.
6. The Council had passed a motion to write to the Secretary of State for DEFRA with regard to bringing forward requirements to make Southern Water accountable for Sewage infrastructure upgrades which the Green Party abstained or objected to.

Wealden District Council is currently rated as being one of the top 5 District Councils in the country and the new administration has inherited the District with sound finances, highly rated services, low debts, adequate reserves and below average council taxes for a shire authority.

The remaining Conservative group will watch closely and identify where the new administration falls short and shall inform the electorate accordingly.